

FEBRUARY 16, 2005

DESERT VOICE

Wartime

Art



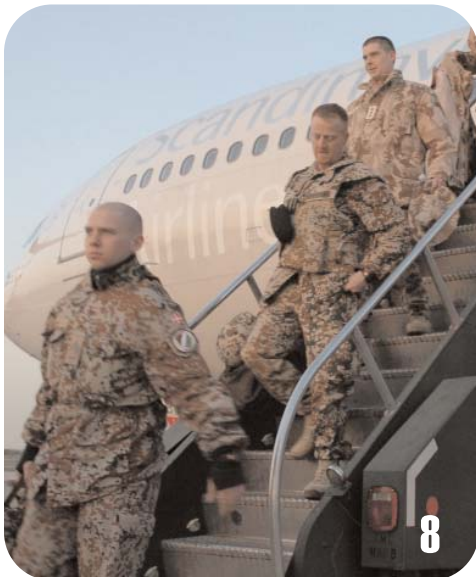
CONTENTS

DESERT VOICE

Volume 26, Issue 27

The Desert Voice is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents of the Desert Voice are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government or Department of the Army. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the Coalition Forces Land Component Command Public Affairs Office. This newspaper is published by Al-Qabandi United, a private firm, which is not affiliated with CFLCC. All copy will be edited. The Desert Voice is produced weekly by the Public Affairs Office.

27



Page 3 Back to the stables

The 1st Cavalry Division began its migration down from Iraq to its temporary home at Camp Victory by sending its Early Entry Command Post, followed by the division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team.

Page 4 Back with the family

With more than 100,000 troops on their way home to their families, there's bound to be anxiety and tension. While things on the homefront won't likely be the same, there's no reason things can't still be great.

Page 5 Re-up or go officer

Here are some of the options available to Active, Reserve and National Guard troops looking to continue serving in the military.

Pages 6&7 History in the making?

Throughout American history, art has played a role in maintaining the morale of Soldiers and stimulating esprit de corps. Troops in Kuwait continue this legacy with a paintbrush.

Page 8 Take five

Denmark has begun its fifth rotation in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Page 9 Level-2 armor

Every day, the Army adds dozens of Level-2 armor kits to its existing fleet. Many of those kits are added here in Kuwait.

Page 10 A new place to congregate

Camp Virginia officially dedicated its new chapel, a large, peaceful building with stained glass windows, opening it to causes religious and fun-oriented alike.

Page 11 Community

Bravo Army Theater Company, Black History Jeopardy, Persian carpet seminar, Poetry night, President's Day Bingo, Bazaar, Hip-hop dance night.

Back page Cartoon, stories, etc.

Submissions from Merci F. McDaniels, Capt. Paul Nichols, Spc. Christina Bloom and Lt. Col. John Schrader.



CFLCC Commanding General

Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb

CFLCC Command Sergeant Major

Command Sgt. Maj. Julian Kellman

CFLCC Public Affairs Officer

Col. Michael Phillips

Commander 14th PAD

Maj. Thomas E. Johnson

NCOIC 14th PAD

Staff Sgt. Sheryl Lawry

Editor

Sgt. Matt Millham

14th PAD Writers

Spc. Curt Cashour

Spc. Brian Trapp

Spc. Aimee Felix

Broadcasters

Sgt. Scott White

Spc. Chase Spears



On the Cover Troops stationed in Kuwait supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom have an artistic way of leaving their marks on the barren landscape.

Photo by Spc. Aimee Felix
Photo illustration by Sgt. Matt Millham

1st Cav heads for the stables

Story by Spc. Brian Trapp

The initial wave of the 1st Cavalry Division is on its way home, passing through the camps in Kuwait after more than a year in Iraq.

In that wave is the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, as well as thousands of troops attached to the division from all over the Army and National Guard. The multifaceted and well-orchestrated movement parallels the complexity of the Cav's hardest fought battles in Iraq.

The 1st Cavalry Division, out of Fort Hood, Texas, went into Iraq in the beginning of 2004 and took responsibility for the greater Baghdad area during some of the heaviest fighting in Iraq.

The 1st Cav's Early Entry Command Post arrived in Kuwait before that in order to bring the division into theater; now they're staying late to send it out. The EECP, a team of 41 Soldiers with a variety of specialties from movement to customs, started working on the redeployment as the division was still rolling into Iraq, said Lt. Col. Larry Phelps, commander of the EECP, which is responsible for working with units in Kuwait to organize and prepare for the division's move back home.

The 2nd BCT consolidated with other units for the journey home. The movement of thousands of people and thousands of pieces of equipment calls for the coordination of buses, trucks, helicopters, C-130s, strategic air, and ships, Phelps said. "It's an orchestra putting it all together."

While some of the 2nd BCT troops were flying, others had to drive their equipment south. Phelps considers the convoys south a highlight of his day, knowing the troops are coming out of combat into a safer area.

"When troops cross the border to Kuwait at Camp Navistar, we call it 'crossing the breakpoint.' It keeps the [EECP Soldier's] motivation pretty high," he said.

One of the Soldiers who convoyed across the breakpoint at the Iraq-Kuwait border was Col. Mike Formica, commander of the division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, who is heading home with his troops after more than a year of serving in some of the biggest battles in Iraq.

"When we crossed the border into Kuwait, a tremendous weight lifted," Formica said. "I sleep well at night not having to worry about our Soldiers getting hit by an [improvised explosive device] or rocket and mortar attacks."

The 2nd BCT, known as the Black Jack Brigade, served in western Baghdad, the battles in An Najaf and Fallujah, found one of the largest weapons caches to date and brought relative safety to Iraqis in what was informally



Photo by Spc. Andy Miller, 122nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Capt. Ryan Mitcha, a fire support officer with the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, watches as Iraqi mothers and their children choose school supplies from a bin in the Latifiyah area of north Babil Jan. 24.

known as the "triangle of death." Now, the brigade is at Camp Victory making final preparations to return home.

"They have fought when it was required, and they fought well," Phelps said. Their track record in battle aside, some of the division's greatest achievements came during its interaction with Iraqi communities.

The division participated in every major operation in theater, but improving the Iraqi's quality of life and helping them build a democracy was the biggest part, Phelps said. The division concentrated on rebuilding the sewage, water, electricity and trash infrastructure throughout the country.

Originally expecting to return home in late November or early December, the division saw its tour extended twice, once with one foot halfway out the door. They had already started packing containers with equipment, Formica said, and many of the Soldiers had already sold their televisions and stereos, expecting to see their home in just a few weeks.

Then, the extension orders came down. "Instead of redeploying we were sent to Fallujah," Formica said.

He recalled it as probably the lowest point of the deployment, "I had to tell the troops," Formica said. He said he and all the other leaders knew the division wouldn't be going home in January either. He told his troops "they're not going to pull us out from there before the elections," he said.

That prediction held true. When the second

extension came in December, the 2nd BCT headed for southern Baghdad and the triangle of death.

Although difficult, Formica said both of the extensions had an effect on making the Iraqi elections as successful as they were.

"If Fallujah hadn't happened, the elections would not have happened," Formica said. The anti-Iraqi forces would have had a stronghold to operate from, giving them the strength to stop the elections from happening.

The extension that took the Soldiers to south Baghdad resulted in troops with the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment of the 2nd BCT finding one of the largest weapons caches to date. There were tons of weapons buried in several locations about 35 miles south of Baghdad. Before the 2nd BCT arrived in Southern Baghdad, the Iraqi independent election committee decided it was too dangerous an area to place any polling stations. About a month after the 2nd BCT showed up, officials declared the area safe enough to place polling stations.

"The high-water mark [of the deployment] had to be the elections. The 14 months, the loss of Soldiers and those elections made it worth it. If [the elections] hadn't happened, it would have made us question our sacrifices."

The last of the division will likely fly out in mid-April with Phelps. "We won't keep any Soldier here a day longer than we have to, and we're going to do (redeployment) right," he said. "Doing it right doesn't necessarily mean doing it quick."

Redeployment

Readjusting to life back home after a year at war

Story by Spc. Brian Trapp

Troops heading home after their tour in Operation Iraqi Freedom are undoubtedly looking forward to returning to the United States and their old lives, but will life ever be the same?

After reviewing enough studies and redeployment handbooks, troubles may start to seem inevitable, but they don't have to be. With some work, extra effort and time, troops can successfully readjust to life at home.

The first step is the redeployment phase, which runs from about a month before returning until the actual homecoming. During this time, it's normal for troops to feel nervous and anxious about their homecoming. Expectations about what the homecoming will be like may run high, and it can be a frustrating and upsetting experience. Return dates change, and sometimes troops returning in the middle of the night expecting a hero's welcome will have to find their own way home.

To avoid disappointment over the homecoming, "use expectation management; make it realistic," said Air Force Lt. Col. Bill Wall, commander of the Combat Operation Stress Team – Air Force, based at Camp Arifjan. Troops can expect their family to pick them up and give them a hug, but not to show up and carry their hero away on their shoulders.

After troops are greeted by families and friends, it's time for the work to begin. Troops may return to a home that is different from what they left. The same people are there, but they've changed, just as the deployment has changed the servicemember. There is a period of readjustment and reintegrating into relationships and families that will last from just a few weeks to a few months, Wall said.

For those returning home to children, there may be challenges of reclaiming a role as a parent. Troops may be disappointed by their children's sulky, withdrawn, or even hostile behavior, but this behavior doesn't mean a child stopped needing or loving their parent; they just need some time to adjust to having them around again, according to the Red Cross guide "Welcome Home: A guide to a healthy family reunion."

Babies younger than 1 year old may not know the Soldier and cry when held, according to the Department of the Army study, "The Emotional Cycle of Deployment: A military family perspective." Toddlers may be slow to warm up. Pre-schoolers may feel

guilty and scared of the separation. School-age children may want a lot of attention. Teenagers may be moody and may not appear to care.

Children may also be resistant to authority from a returning parent. They are often loyal to the parent who remained behind and do not respond to discipline from the returning Soldier, according to the DA study.

Returning mothers may have to deal with reactions that returning fathers may not have to deal with. The nurturing role children look for in mothers is disrupted during deployment, according to the Red Cross guide. With infants and toddlers, the reactions might not be obvious at first, "but they can escalate into developmental problems if you don't make an immediate effort to reestablish" a strong link with them.

"Don't try to force positive responses from the child. Their behavior usually doesn't last long, but still it's unsettling."

Part of reintegrating into a family is picking up roles in the household again. Parents who want to reclaim their role in the family need to approach this with flexibility.

"Returning to roles in the household can cause problems if approached in a rigid way," Wall said.

It's not just the person returning who deserves a hero's welcome, Wall said. "While you've been gone, [the spouse has] been dealing with kids and all the stressors. The person returning has to be celebrating what [the spouse has]

been doing in your absence. It's not all about me, it's about them too - it's a marital team."

Intimacy, one of the most personal aspects of a marital team, also takes time to rekindle. "Because sex is such a powerful and instinctive way to keep couples feeling intimate, it tends to dominate both partners' thinking and fantasizing during the deployment, becoming the focus of the reunion as well," according to the Red Cross guide. "This can lead to disappointment."

While couples may look for a quick fix to

get back to the way things were, "there is no one set of guidelines for rebuilding intimacy."

Some servicemembers and their partners should be prepared for the possibility of temporary performance difficulties, and expect to feel strange together at first. It's normal to feel physically and emotionally awkward together. Sex can resume immediately, but intimacy might take longer to reestablish. Regaining intimate normalcy takes from one night to a full month. If it takes longer than that, the relationship probably had preexisting problems, Wall said.

The biggest things that help people through the readjustment period and all of the challenges that come with it are communication and time, Wall said.

One of the areas that affects communication in relationships the most is emotional response during this time, Wall said. Traumatic events and constant stressful situations can cause people to be numb. Troops who've dealt with a lot of mortar fire and similar dangerous situations won't necessarily have the same reactions to their loved ones as they did before their deployment.

Sometimes troops can go the other direction and have exaggerated reactions. The servicemembers have been gone, and they haven't dealt with conflicts at home for six months to a year, Wall said. On top of that,



Photo by Air Force Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

After a year in Iraq, Sgt. Robb H. Schlottfeldt, a member of the 141st Engineer Combat Battalion, holds his daughter at a homecoming celebration while his wife looks on at Hector International Airport in Fargo, N.D., on Feb. 8, 2005.

"the way they deal with conflicts [while deployed] is drastically different than the way they deal with them at home."

Wall recommended active listening and dropping what's going on to give a spouse undivided attention.

"Readjusting with your family is like landing an airplane," said Wall. "You have to come in at a gradual angle and bring the plane in smoothly. You can't just point the nose at the ground and get there as quick as possible."

If you're going to do it, do it now

Story by Spc. Curt Cashour

Maintaining an all volunteer force in the midst of a high operational tempo is tough. The Army recognizes this and has been tweaking bonuses and benefits over the last few months to keep retention on track.

In late December, Army Reserve and National Guard officials unveiled a new benefits and bonus package that significantly increased retention incentives for both the Guard and Reserve.

Highlights of the benefits include:

- A \$7,500 lump sum bonus for Soldiers reenlisting or extending for three years
- A \$15,000 lump sum bonus for Soldiers reenlisting or extending for six years
- \$18,000 of Student Loan Repayment Program benefits for Soldiers re-enlisting or extending for six years

The changes, which also include expanded health, dental and educational benefits, have brought the Guard's bonuses and benefits to their highest levels ever, said Sgt. Maj. Bob Graham, a theater retention sergeant major with the National Guard Bureau, who is serving at the Coalition Forces Land Component Command National Guard and Reserve Retention office at Camp Arifjan.

Graham and Guard retention noncommissioned officer Sgt. 1st Class Richard Garmong travel throughout the Central Command Theater reenlisting Soldiers and keeping them up to date on benefits and incentives. Response to the new benefits has been overwhelming, they said. Prior to the new bonuses, retention in theater was average. Demand has increased so much, however, that Guard retention officials in theater are scrambling to keep up with all the inquiries about the incentives, Graham said.

"It used to be the commander or the first sergeant contacting the Soldier about reenlisting. Now it's the Soldier going to the command saying, 'when can I reenlist, am I eligible, and so forth,'" said Graham.

As a result of the changes, Guard reenlistments in the CENTCOM Theater have increased at least threefold, Graham said.

Reserve retention officials have also seen increased interest in reenlistment inquiries, said CFLCC Reserve Retention NCO Sgt. 1st Class Amy Phillips. Master Sgt. Patrick M. McKie, CFLCC theater retention manager, said the increased money and benefits do help in persuading indecisive Soldiers to take the oath again, but stressed that most Soldiers are interested more in service than money.

"Most of the Soldiers reenlisting would have reenlisted anyway. [The new benefits



Photo by Sgt. Maj. Bob Graham

Members of the 639th Quartermaster Company, a National Guard unit from Kallispell, Mont., participate in a reenlistment ceremony Jan. 15 at the Royal Cemetery, in Tallil, Iraq.

are] just an added incentive to thank them for their service, really. I like to believe that most Soldiers in the Army serve not for money, but serve in the Army for a higher purpose," he said.

The new incentives are not military occupational specialty related, but are available only to Soldiers who are not barred or flagged and have less than 16 years of total military service. It's important to note that the aforementioned cash bonuses for Army reservists apply only to deployed Soldiers. A number of other restrictions also apply and the enhanced incentives are available for a limited time, so contact your career counselor for more information.

On the active side, the Army is offering lump sum bonuses of up to \$15,000, depending on time in service, pay grade and contract length, for those with less than 14 years of active service enlisting in Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan, according to Master Sgt. William Cooley, a senior career counselor with the 43rd Area Support Group at Camp Arifjan.

The thing that has helped retention the most, however, has been the Army waiving the requirement that a Soldier be within 12 months of their expiration of term of service before reenlisting. This policy applies to those serving in Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan, and will allow qualified Soldiers with more than a year remaining on their contracts to get tax-free bonus money by adding extra years onto their contracts,

Cooley said, adding that all Army bonuses now come in lump sums.

For more information, contact one of the following retention offices:

CFLCC Retention Office, National Guard:

DSN 430-7193 Cell 937-7659 or

986-9802 Reserve: DSN 438-7193 Cell

788-2985 or 786-3069

43rd ASG Retention Office DSN 430-7334.

Become an officer

Think you've got the enlisted thing down? Maybe you should take it to the next level with Army Officer Candidate School.

To qualify, you'll need to meet a number of requirements, including:

- Be a United States citizen
- Achieve a General Technical Aptitude Test score of at least 110 on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery
- Obtain a passing score on the Scholastic Assessment Test or the American College Test
- Have a secret security clearance
- Have at least 90 semester hours of study from an accredited college or university and be able to complete a bachelor degree in one year or less

Other restrictions do apply. For more information, consult the Army OCS web page at www.infantry.army.mil/ocs/index.htm, Army Regulation 350-51 or contact an Army career counselor.



Phoenix native Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert Andrews paints the finishing touches of his unit's insignia on a Texas barrier at the Kuwaiti Naval Base Feb. 8. Andrews is a construction mechanic with the Naval Expeditionary Logistics Support Force Forward Bravo.

Wartime History in the making?

art

Story and photos by Spc. Aimee Felix

Soldier art has taken on many forms throughout American history. From artillery shell embossing in World War II to rock painting at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., Soldiers have used art as a way to express themselves and to leave their mark.

Ranging from construction mechanics to truck drivers, the creators of the artwork displayed on walls, doors and barriers at camps throughout Kuwait have done the same, leaving their mark while adding a little color to our otherwise institutional camps.

For two National Guard Soldiers from the 158th Corps Support Battalion out of Glendale, Ariz., painting the wall outside their battalion commander's office started out as an unofficial Christmas decorating competition. But when Spc. Robin Lawson

and Sgt. Chivona Cruz saw how impressed everyone was with the painting and how their peers enjoyed it, they decided to make painting the wall a seasonal thing. For the competition, Cruz and Lawson had painted a Santa, which Cruz described as "big as day," with dozens of presents spilling over at his feet. Their second theme was Martin Luther King. During the down-time they had from their 9- to 12-hour work days, Cruz and Lawson sanded down their life-size Santa and started up with a portrait of Dr. King.

For their most recent painting, which has a Valentine's Day theme, Cruz and Lawson went through the whole process all over again, waiting until few people were around so they could sand down the painting without disturbing anyone. They got a new supply of paint from the Camp Arifjan self-help shop, penciled out the drawing and finally painted it. Each time, the process takes about three days to complete. Cruz and



Lawson never had any particular artistic inclination before, they said. They both work full time and attend college in Arizona. But here, with not much else to do for entertainment and knowing that it brightens the days of a lot of troops including themselves, they remain inspired.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Douglass Mitchell, another painter, makes his civilian living as a landscape architect in Jasper, Ind. This artistic inclination led him to design patches for a few of his unit's companies. As a result of that endeavor, one of Mitchell's chief's asked him to paint a jersey barrier for their unit, the Naval Expeditionary Logistics Support Force Forward Bravo stationed at Kuwaiti Naval Base. Because Mitchell gets only a small amount of downtime, it's taken him more than two weeks to paint the barrier. But Feb. 8, Mitchell got the helping hands of Petty Officer 2nd Class

Robert Andrews, to speed up the process. Mitchell explains that the "branding trend" that has marked everything from Texas barriers to benches in theater is a result of unit pride. "It's like being on a high school sports team," he said.

Another KNB artist offered a different explanation. "Army units like to leave their mark – to show we were there. We're proud of what we've done," said

Sgt. 1st Class David L. O'Dell, a maintenance mechanic with the Washington National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 146th Field Artillery Regiment. O'Dell, who will be returning home the last week of February after a year in Kuwait, finally decided to paint a barrier for his unit after several of his peers had asked him to. O'Dell put it off until now because the weather was too hot, and right when it cooled down it was time for his rest and recuperation leave.

O'Dell once painted a four-foot diameter mural of Victorian roses on the ceiling of his home for his wife. That was when he used to paint, though. He stopped painting 14 years ago as he got more involved in woodworking, but because he thought he wouldn't have much in the form of morale boosters during this deployment, he was inspired to paint again. Throughout the deployment he drew portraits for several of his peers in exchange for the paint materials their families would send for him.

SpC. Joel Morgan, a truck driver with the 308th Transportation Company under the 354th Transportation Battalion, also became his unit's resident artist. Morgan was charged by his commander and first sergeant with painting the door of his unit's headquarters tent at Camp Arifjan's Zone 6 after word spread about his work on the barriers surrounding his company's living tents. Because of his hectic work schedule, it's hard to imagine Morgan painted all he did and drew sketches for his peers. "When he's not out working he's drawing," said Sgt. Victoria Keebler about her Soldier.

Morgan and his company go home Feb. 25 after a year in Kuwait, and Morgan, one of many Soldier-artists who have come and gone, will have played a role in keeping the history of Soldier art alive.



Bottom Left: Petty Officer 2nd Class Douglas Mitchell of Jasper, Ind., paints an oak leaf on a Texas barrier for his unit, the Naval Expeditionary Logistics Support Force Forward Bravo at Kuwaiti Naval Base, Feb. 8. People get competitive about painting the barriers to leave their unit's mark, said Mitchell, but it's all in good fun, he added.



Soldiers deployed to Kuwait have left their mark on barriers, walls and doors throughout camps in Kuwait. Soldiers expressing themselves through art during wartime has a longstanding historical precedent. In World War II, the favorite materials were mess kits, artillery shells, cigarette lighters and other metal objects that Soldiers carved complex designs into. Today, Soldiers paint just about anything they are allowed to put a brush to.



Take five

Story and photo by Spc. Aimee Felix

Danish Infantrymen, military police officers and medics quickly filed out of a Scandinavian airliner as they hurriedly walked to one of four buses waiting to take them on the beginning of their journey to Iraq. Their trip from Denmark was so hurried that as they got off the plane they bumped into old friends they were just flying with, but didn't have the opportunity to stop and chat with until they arrived in Kuwait.

The fifth rotation of Danish troops fighting in the coalition supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom arrived in Kuwait Feb. 10 on their way to Basrah, Iraq, where they will take over the mission the fourth rotation of

Danish troops had. The fourth rotation will return to Denmark the third week of February.

The Danish Army Contingents or DANCON, as the deployed Danish units are called, deploy for six months at a time and are each made up of about 500 troops. Their mission includes providing security around the camp the Danish troops are based at in Iraq and providing escorts for convoys traveling through the supply routes in southern Iraq.

DANCON also has a civil affairs team that has played a major role in the opening of schools and hospitals in Iraq. The civil affairs team started several agricultural projects in southern Iraq, including the improved irrigation of farmland, said Staff Sgt. Michael Rasmussen, the logistics noncommissioned officer in charge of Danish troops rotating in and out of theater. DANCON has also been working closely with the Iraqi army, training them, said Rasmussen, who added that the training has been especially successful.

The day of their arrival to Kuwait, two Danish Soldiers who live in the same town in Denmark greeted each other with a hug and a handshake as they walked toward their respective buses. Sgt. Claus Norgaard and Cpl. Martin Skovbakke also deployed together to Bosnia once. "I know it'll be harder than Bosnia," said Norgaard, a DANCON medic, about this deployment. Norgaard volunteered for this deployment for the excitement and adventure of it. Skovbakke volunteered for what will be his last mission in the army. He has deployed three times to Bosnia and once to Kosovo. "After this, I'm done. I want to educate myself and start a family," he said. The fact that his wife and family are unhappy with these missions, as most Danes are, is another factor influencing his decision.

Although most Danes don't agree with the fact that the United States went into this war without U.N. backing, Skovbakke said the Danish people are supportive of the troops themselves – something that seems to be common around the globe.

There are Danish media outlets highlighting the positive aspects of the Danish mission in Iraq in an attempt to show Danes that the efforts of their troops are not in vain, said Rasmussen. A Danish TV crew followed the fourth rotation around for some of their



The fifth rotation of Danish troops arrived in Kuwait Feb. 10 on their way to Basrah, Iraq. This rotation has 540 troops, up from 496 in the fourth rotation.

Danish facts

The country of Denmark is made up of a peninsula called Jutland and two major islands Sjaelland and Fyn.

The capital of Denmark is Copenhagen.

Denmark was settled 10,000 years ago when the ice retreated from Scandinavia.

Denmark was first organized as a unified state in the 10th century, and it became a constitutional monarchy in 1849.

The natural hazard in Denmark is flooding. Nowhere in Denmark is the sea more than 45 minutes away.

Built in 1913 on a rock on the shore of Langelinie, The Little Mermaid is a four-foot tall structure as symbolic to the Danes as the Eiffel Tower is to the French. Denmark prides itself on being a bicycle-friendly country with thousands of kilometers of established cycling routes crisscrossing the entire country.

Equality is an important part of Danish culture, so much so that success or anything that may be seen as a deliberate attempt to distinguish oneself from others is frowned upon. This characteristic is called Janteloven or Jante's Law by Danes. Danes are not flattered by compliments about the way they look or about their clothing; they consider compliments to be inappropriate.

Fairy-tale writer Hans Christian Anderson and atomic physicist Niels Bohr were both from Denmark.

Danish culinary specialties include beef tartar, usually served with raw egg, hering and meatballs.

deployment, reporting the reconstructive efforts the Danish troops have facilitated in southern Iraq, said Rasmussen.

Skovbakke understands the good things going on in Iraq, but he is also aware of and prepared for the bad things. Having transferred from a tank squadron to a supply group in order to deploy on this mission, he knows that on his supply runs to Baghdad he will face the risk of explosives on the road, or being shot at or kidnapped, but he feels prepared, he said. The pre-deployment training DANCON troops undergo is at least three months long, with additional training according to the individual troops' specialty.

DANCON troops each come into theater with their own body armor, helmets and weapons. The only thing they exchange with the departing rotation is ammunition. If DANCON troops run out of anything while in Iraq, Rasmussen coordinates for the needed goods to be available for the contingent's supply specialists to come pick the items up in Kuwait. Rasmussen also handles the mail for the Danish troops. He collects it every day and brings it to the border for the Danish contingent's mail handler to pick up, and twice a week, Rasmussen delivers packages. At the border he also picks up mail and packages that troops mail out. Mail is the most important thing; it keeps the troops going for what can seem like an eternity away from family, said Rasmussen.

Based on their training and the successes of previous Danish rotations, Rasmussen is confident in the readiness of the Danish troops, and the troops are just as confident, said Skovbakke.

The many forms of Level-2 armor

Story and photos by Spc. Curt Cashour

While the armoring of small trucks traversing the highways and streets of Iraq has enjoyed the spotlight in recent months, the armoring of larger vehicles has largely remained in the shadows.

But largescale efforts began more than a year and a half ago to ensure that the vehicles hauling supplies around Iraq, and not just the vehicles pulling security for them, were ready to face the most punishing attacks by insurgents. Many of those efforts are carried out here in Kuwait.

The Army, along with scores of defense contractors, started developing various armor technologies in August 2003, when insurgents ramped up improvised explosive device attacks in post-invasion Iraq.

"From the moment the attacks started, the Army started energizing," said Lt. Col. Lisa Kirkpatrick, a product manager for the Army's Program Executive Office for Combat Support and Combat Service Support.

The Army is almost two years into a comprehensive campaign designed to harden vehicles traveling into harms way. Level-1 Humvees, which have armor integrated into nearly every aspect of their construction, are being produced at a rate of almost 500 a month — up from 15 a month in August 2003 — according to a Feb. 8 article by the Army News Service. Installation of Level-2 kits, which include ballistic steel plates and bulletproof windows, is going strong as well, according to Chuck Wentworth, program manager and tactical wheeled vehicles liaison officer for southwest Asia who oversees the delivery and installation of all Level-2 armor kits in theater.

More than 10,000 Humvees have been equipped with Level-2 armor to date, Wentworth said. In addition, more than 2,000 medium and heavy trucks have received Level-2 upgrades. Vehicles equipped with Level-3 armor, ad hoc kits designed, fabricated and installed in theater, are receiving Level-2 upgrades on a daily basis in Iraq.

All of this progress has taken place in less than two years, a fact made even more impressive by the reality that research, development and fielding processes for defense projects typically take about five years, Wentworth said.

"I don't know how the Army can do any more," he said.

The hardest part of the Level-2 mission is matching up assets with facilities and workers, Wentworth said. Almost 1,000 contractors are

at work hardening vehicles in southwest Asia. For them, however, it's not a matter of simply putting in a day's work. The workers are spread across 11 sites, three in Kuwait and eight in Iraq, which are sometimes subject to security threats, inclement weather and limited resources.

"I can't think of a more stressful environment in which to work," Wentworth said.

But workers in the facilities don't seem to mind the conditions. At a Level-2 facility near Camp Victory, Kuwait, that specializes in medium and heavy trucks, mechanics race around Heavy Equipment Transporters, Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Trucks and other vehicles, augmenting them with tan-colored ballistic-steel plates, bulletproof glass and air-conditioning units.

Almost 300 people from countries such as the United States, India, Germany and England work at the location, rotating in 12-hour shifts, seven days a week, said Noah Byers, international after-market sales manager for Oshkosh Truck Corporation, which runs the site.

"It's pretty much a coalition support effort," he said.

Zijad Memisevic is one of several Bosnians who work at the facility. He and his fellow countrymen got their start working on U.S. military vehicles at Camp Eagle, Bosnia, and jumped at the chance to come to Kuwait to help with the add-on armor mission.

As Memisevic puts it, the job brings people of different nationalities "together in one cause to help the U.S. Army as they head up north."

South of the Oshkosh facility at Camp Doha, Kuwait, a different kind of Level-2 armor operation is just getting started. Workers at the Tanker Ballistic Protection System Project shop coat the exterior of Army tanker trailers with a special polyurethane glaze.

Dubbed "Rhino liner," the substance has been used for years to keep pickup truck beds free of scratches and other damage. Now it will help American Soldiers safely transport cargo on the convoy routes of Iraq.

The coating can deflect enemy rounds at certain angles, and if an object does happen to penetrate the tanker's skin, the coating seals the damage from the outside and inside, thereby preventing leaks, said Frank G.



Above: Ashok Kumar, a mechanic from Kerala, India, secures a ballistic windshield on a Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck at a Level-2 armor shop near Camp Victory, Kuwait, Feb. 8. Left: Coating Specialist Andy Larson sprays a protective polyurethane coating on an Army tanker trailer at the Tanker Ballistic Protection System Project Shop at Camp Doha Feb. 8.

Wickersham III, international program manager for VSE Corporation, which runs the site.

VSE also equips the tankers with ballistic steel plates that protect their sides. Workers at the site have completed about 26 tankers so far and are scheduled to finish their 500th trailer by the end of May, Wickersham said.

At Camp Arifjan's Forward Repair Activity shop, up to 26 hardened Level-2 Humvees are rolling off the assembly line each day, said Michael D. Cannon, Forward Repair Activity division chief. Workers replace canvas doors with ballistic-steel behemoths weighing in at more than 200 pounds and conventional windows and windshields with hardened glass that's nearly four inches thick. Each truck also receives an air conditioner.

Off to the side of the assembly line, pock-marked windows that protected Soldiers during IED and small-arms attacks are on display. A worker explained the story behind one of the windows. An insurgent shot the side of a Level-2 Humvee several times with an AK-47. Some of the rounds ricocheted off the door and window and ended up killing the insurgent, he said.

Wentworth said the Army's Level-2 operations will continue for at least the next five years. As the current fleet of hardened vehicles wears out, it will be replaced by one consisting primarily of Level-1 vehicles.

In the meantime, the Army's efforts have done a lot to help the Soldiers in Iraq.

"You can see a difference in their expressions, demeanor and their confidence. They're ready to go to war," Wentworth said.

Serving all in faith and fun

Story and photos by Spc. Almee Felix

Walk in, and you'll be humbled by the sun rays coming from what looks, quite literally, like a light at the end of a tunnel. The rays, filtered through an almost 14-foot-tall stained-glass window on the main wall of the chapel, fall perfectly on tea-brown pews, inducing a serene, ethereal feeling troops on their way to a war zone would otherwise not experience in Kuwait.

Although church services began there about three weeks ago, a dedication ceremony Saturday made the opening of Camp Virginia's new chapel official. Regardless of your faith, the chapel is a sanctuary fit for anyone looking for a little peace of mind.

With seating for about 450 people, the chapel is a hefty upgrade from Virginia's former tent chapel, which had a maximum capacity of 160. "We had to turn people away during our last Thanksgiving service," said Camp Virginia Chaplain (Maj.) Taz W. Randles with the 687th Quartermaster Battalion, a Reserve unit out of Decatur, Ill.

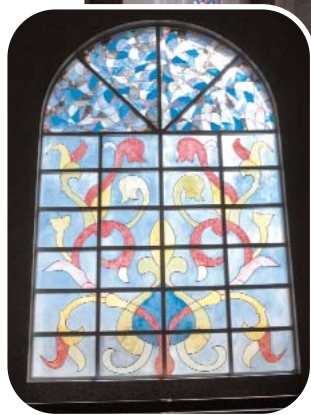
While Randles wasn't around when the idea for the chapel came about in September 2004, when the former Camp Virginia command was still around, he said he's grateful to those who made it happen.

Camp Virginia's former commander, Lt. Col. Thomas Kallman, wanted a real chapel for troops rotating through Kuwait, and that's what he got: a large, white, red-roofed chapel that stands out among Camp Virginia's sand roads and tents.

Between Kallman, Camp Virginia's former contracting officer Maj. Terrence D. Lang, interior designer Gulu Jagtianey and contract workers from TWI, the company that built the chapel, a design for the chapel was ready by mid-September 2004, and contractors broke ground Oct. 14, 2004, after approval from the Defense Logistics Agency.

"The design is both functional and beautiful," said Jagtianey. Extra attention was paid during the design process to ensure the chapel was both religiously unbiased and not institutional looking, said Jagtianey. There are several stained-glass windows adorning the chapel, all of which have abstract floral designs on them. "My boss stressed that there should be no crosses or saints," said Jagtianey about TWI Vice President Max Shaw.

The designers also made sure to include high ceilings in order to have good acoustics. Aside from the fact that the good



Above: An interior view of Camp Virginia's spacious new chapel. Left: The stained-glass window on the chapel's main wall.

acoustics give the structure an authentic chapel feel, they will also be good for Morale Welfare and Recreation events, said Jagtianey.

To not disturb the chapel's ambience, builders used silent generators for the chapel, and the location they picked for the chapel is far enough from any of the other normal generators at Camp Virginia, said Randles.

Being that he's a mental health therapist back home, Randles doesn't underestimate the emotional release that troops can get

from singing, congregating and fulfilling their spiritual needs. "That personal touch can be very valuable in a situation like this."

One of the reasons Virginia's command group got approval for the chapel is because Virginia is slated to be an enduring camp. Another chapel was built in Camp Arifjan's Zone 6 and another is in the works for Camp Buehring.

President's Day contest

To commemorate President's Day, Feb. 21, the Coalition Forces Land Component Command Army Reserve and Army National Guard office is sponsoring a President's Day contest that will test participant's knowledge on the military backgrounds of U.S. presidents. Winners will be drawn at random from among participants who answer all questions correctly for \$50, \$20, \$15 and \$10 AAFES gift certificates. The contest is available online at https://freddie.forscom.army.mil/3a_ra/new_items/Presidents%20Day%20Contest.htm.

The rules are:

- There is only one correct answer for each question
- You can take the test as many times as you like, however, you can only win one prize
- The contest will end on Feb. 19. Winners will be notified by e-mail on Feb. 20. Winners do not need to be present to win
- The contest is open to all military and civilian personnel except for those personnel assigned to the CFLCC Army Reserve Affairs and Army National Guard Affairs offices

For Army Reserve and Guard Soldiers, go to this site for the latest on reenlistment bonuses.

Say goodbye a little longer

The last thing any troops or military family member wants to do after a year apart is wait even one minute longer than they have to for their family reunion.

The Transportation Safety Administration, recognizing this, now allows the family members of military passengers access to airport gates.

The same access is also given to military family members seeing their troops off from the airport, according to a new security directive from the TSA.

In order to get access to the gate, family members must go to the desk for the airline on which their troop is flying and get a gate pass. In order to get through the security checkpoint, family members will have to have a gate pass as well as photo identification.

Community

happenings for Feb. 16 through Feb. 23

Arifjan

Wednesday

Black History Jeopardy, 7 p.m., Community Center
Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR tent
Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR tent
Combat Kick Boxing 5:30 a.m., Power Stretching 8 a.m., Bench/Step Workout 10 a.m., Body Pump Workout 1 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent
Aerobics, 6 p.m., Zone 6 gym tent
Aerobics, 7 p.m., Zone 2 gym tent

Thursday

Persian Carpet Seminar, 10 a.m. - 7 p.m., Community Center
Country Music Night, 7 p.m., Community Center
Horseshoe Tournament, 6 p.m., Zone 6
Spinning Class, 5:30 p.m., Zone 2 gym tent
Open Mic Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR area
Karate Class, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR area
Basketball signups begin, Zone 1 gym

Friday

Persian Carpet Seminar, 10 a.m. - 7 p.m., Community Center
Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Community Center
Indoor theatre, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR area
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool
Aerobics, 6 p.m., Zone 6 MWR tent
Aerobics, 7 p.m., Zone 2 gym tent

Saturday

R&B Night, 7 p.m., Community Center
Basketball League signups cutoff and coaches meeting, 7 p.m., Fitness Center
Combat Kick Boxing 5:30 a.m., Power Stretching 8 a.m., Bench/Step Workout 10 a.m., Body Pump Workout 1 p.m., Combat Kick Boxing 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool

Sunday

Salsa Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR tent
Poetry Night, 7 p.m., Community Center theatre
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool
Bench/Step Workout 5:30 a.m., Super Abs 8 a.m., Power Stretching 10 a.m., Body Pump Workout 1 p.m., Bench/Step Workout 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

Monday

President's Day Trivia, 7 p.m., Community Center
Spa Day, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Zone 6
Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 2 stage
Foosball Tournament, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool
Combat Kick Boxing 5:30 a.m., Power Stretching 8 a.m., Bench/Step Workout 10 a.m., Body Pump Workout 1 p.m., Combat Kick Boxing 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent
Aerobics, 6 p.m., Zone 6 gym tent

Tuesday

Top 40 Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR tent
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool
Bench/Step Workout 5:30 a.m., Super Abs 8 a.m., Power Stretching 10 a.m., Body Pump Workout 1 p.m., Bench/Step Workout 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

Wednesday

Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR
Bid Whist Tournament, 7 p.m., Community Center

Combat Kick Boxing 5:30 a.m., Power Stretching 8 a.m., Bench/Step Workout 10 a.m., Body Pump Workout 1 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent
For more information call 430-1202

Buehring

Thursday

Country Western Night, 9 p.m., Tent 1

Friday

Bazaar, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tent 1

Saturday

Bazaar, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tent 1

Sunday

Bazaar, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tent 1

Monday

Ping Pong Tournament, 7 p.m., Tent 1

For more information call 828-1340

Doha

Wednesday

Black Light Billiards Tournament, 7 p.m., Frosty's

Friday

Karaoke Night, 7 p.m., Frosty's

Saturday

Basketball signups cutoff and coaches meeting, 7 p.m., Fitness Center
Hip Hop Dance Night, 7 p.m., Frosty's

Sunday

Boxing signups begin, Fitness Center

Monday

President's Day Bingo Bonanza, 7 p.m., Frosty's

Wednesday

Mardi Gras celebration, 7 p.m., Frosty's

For more information call 438-5637

Kuwaiti Naval Base

Wednesday

Self Defense 1, 6 p.m., aerobics room
Foosball Tournament, 7 p.m., new gym

Thursday

Texas Hold'em Poker, 7 p.m., new gym
Techno Dance, 7:30 p.m., old temp. gym tent

Friday

Bowling, 4 p.m., bowling alley
Latin Dance, 7 p.m., old temp. gym tent
Basketball Tournament, 8 p.m., Kuwaiti gym

Saturday

Tennis Tournament, 4 p.m., side of Kuwaiti gym
Ping Pong Tournament, 6 p.m., new gym
Softball, 6 p.m., next to soccer field
R&B Dance, 7 p.m., old temp. gym tent

Sunday

Unit farewell awards ceremony, 5 p.m., Kuwaiti gym
Unit farewell catered dinner, 5:30 p.m., Kuwaiti gym
Bon Fire and chili dogs, 6:30 p.m., beach

Open Mic session, 7 p.m., beach
R&B/Latin music, 8 p.m., beach
Flag Football, 2 p.m., Field next to gym
Aerobics, 6 p.m., Kuwaiti Gym
Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., Aerobics Room

Monday

Marine Corps Martial Arts, 1 p.m., TMC
Darts Tournament, 6 p.m., gym
Chess/Spades/Checkers/Dominoes, 6 p.m., gym
Bowling, 7 p.m., bowling alley

Tuesday

PS2, 5 p.m., new gym
Self Defense 1, 6 p.m., aerobics room
Chess/Spades/Checkers/Dominoes, 6 p.m., new

gym

Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., aerobics room

Wednesday

Self Defense 1, 6 p.m., aerobics room
Foosball Tournament, 7 p.m., new gym

For more information call 839-1009

Navistar

Wednesday

Female Self-Defense Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., MWR tents

Thursday

Karate Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., MWR tents
Bravo Army Theatre Company, 7 - 9:30 p.m., MWR area

Saturday

Dominoe's Tournament, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m., MWR tents

Sunday

Dominoe's Tournament, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m., MWR tents

Monday

Female Self-Defense Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., MWR tents

Tuesday

Karate Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., MWR tents

Wednesday

Female Self-Defense Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., MWR tents

For more information call 844-1138

Spearhead/SPOD

Friday

Dance, 10 p.m. - 1 a.m., DFAC

Saturday

Latin Dance, 10 p.m. - 2 a.m., Coffee Shop

For more information call 825-1302

Victory

Saturday

Spades Tournament, 7 p.m., MWR area

Tuesday

Paint the Jersey Barrier Competition, 9 a.m., MWR area

For more information call 823-1033

Virginia

Wednesday

Hearts Tournament, 6 p.m., Dusty Room

Thursday

Chess Tournament, 6 p.m., MWR tent

Friday

Horseshoe Tournament, 6 p.m., MWR tent

Saturday

Spa Day, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., MWR tent

Sunday

Billiards 2 on 2 Tournament, 6 p.m., MWR tent

Monday

President's Day Charades, 7 p.m., MWR tent

Tuesday

Bingo Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Wednesday

Billiards-Singles Tournament, 6 p.m., MWR tent

For more information call 832-1045

Send your community events to the Desert Voice editor at the address or e-mail listed on the back of this issue.

Wake up

By Merci F. McDaniels

Daddy came home from work and sat down on the couch. Then he said, "I'll be going on a little trip..." I came over to Daddy slowly. I thought he was going to Fort Riley. Then he spoke again, "It's not Ft. Riley...it is New Jersey." I thought, well that's not so bad. "Then it's Iraq." I couldn't believe it. I must be dreaming. So I pinched my arm, I shook my head, I slapped my cheeks and I thought wake up, wake up, wake up! But I couldn't wake up; I just couldn't. So I laid my head on Daddy's shirt and cried.

By Capt. Paul Nichols,
377th Theater Support Command



Editor
CFLCC PAO/Desert Voice
Camp Arifjan
APO AE 09306
matthew.millham@arifjan.army.mil



Photo by Spc. Christina Bloom

Camp New York sponsored a 5.2 mile, after-Super Bowl XXXIX perimeter run Feb. 7. Roughly 100 Soldiers showed up for the run, which kicked off shortly after 2 p.m.

The first soldier to cross the finish line was Spc. Ruben Martinez of Company A, 1st Battalion of the 184 Infantry Regiment, with a time of 34:20. He was followed by PFC William Smith of the 3rd Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade, and the third to cross the line was SPC Ray Garcia, Company D, of the 1-184th. All Soldiers finished the run in less than an hour.

Tsunami aid continues

By Lt. Col. John Schrader,
160th Signal Brigade

The television images of the catastrophic tsunami tragedy in Thailand and across Southeast Asia were a small window into a devastated world we can hardly imagine. Jack Chase looked into that window and decided he had to help. The worldwide outcry for aid for the victims and families led this caring man to ensure that there will be help coming from the Soldiers, civilians and contractors at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. He researched aid efforts underway and started a grass roots campaign to raise funds for relief efforts.

Chase, a logistics specialist in the 160th Signal Brigade, is exceptional in that he decided to do something. His goal to reach \$500 of donations in three days was exceeded within hours. This is the kind of selfless service that many of our 160th Soldiers and family members exhibit all of the time, even while away from their own loved ones.

Chase has so far collected over \$650 to forward to worthy relief organizations. Jack decided he couldn't be an observer, he had to help. "I am proud of Jack and of all our soldiers and civilians" said Col. John Wilcox, commander of the 160th. "Jack is one of our most motivated and positive team members, and I'm not a bit surprised by his action. I'm really pleased with how the headquarters rallied to support the victims." Mr. Chase said, "I couldn't just sit by and do nothing; if everyone tries, then maybe we can make a difference. It's just about helping out in a situation that seems hopeless."

Relief operations are ongoing and will certainly continue for many years. Command Sgt. Maj. Ray Lane, the brigade's command sergeant major said, "Everyone has an opportunity to get involved; sometimes we just need a Jack Chase to get us started". Jack and all of the contributors are just part of what makes the 160th Signal Brigade the "Finest of First."

Safety Corner

Gator safety

From the 377th Theater Support Command
Safety Office

Many troops in this theater use Gator utility vehicles for work. Here are some safe operating practices from the operator's manual.

- 1 No loads heavier than 500 pounds in 4x2 vehicles, 800 pounds in 6x4 and 1,000 pounds in 6x4 diesel models. Make sure the load is distributed evenly and tied down.
- 2 Drive slowly when turning.
- 3 Treat it as a utility vehicle, not a recre-

ational vehicle.

- 4 Horseplay or recreational riding can lead to accidents, severe bodily injury or death.
 - 5 Always use both hands for steering.
 - 6 Never operate vehicle while standing.
 - 7 Never operate vehicle with cargo box raised.
 - 8 Avoid sudden starts, stops or turns.
 - 9 Stay alert for holes, rocks and other hidden hazards in the terrain.
 - 10 All operators are required to wear a helmet at all times, per CFLCC policy.
- For questions or comments on this information or to register for upcoming safety classes contact the 377th safety office's Maj. Phelps at DSN 430-6113 or 1st Lt. Surgi at 430-5414.